



Should obesity be the main game? Or do we need an environmental makeover to combat the inflammatory and chronic disease epidemics?

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Abstract:

There is a link between obesity and chronic disease. However, the causal relationship is complicated. Some forms of obesity are associated with low-level systemic inflammation, which is linked to disease. But lifestyle behaviours that may not necessarily cause obesity (poor diet, inadequate sleep, smoking, etc.) can independently cause inflammation and consequent disease. It is proposed here that it is the environment driving modern lifestyles, which is the true cause of much chronic disease, rather than obesity per se, and that obesity may be a marker of environmental derangement, rather than the primary cause of the problem. Attempts to clinically manage obesity alone on a large scale are therefore unlikely to be successful at the population level without significant lifestyle or environmental change. Environmental factors influencing obesity and health have now also been implicated in ecological perturbations such as climate change, through the shift to positive energy balance in humans caused by the exponential use of fossil fuels in such areas as transport, and consequent rises in carbon emissions into the atmosphere. It is proposed therefore that a more policy-based approach to dealing with obesity, which attacks the common causes of both biological and ecological 'dis-ease', could have positive effects on both chronic disease and environmental problems. A plea is thus made for a greater health input into discussions on environmental regulation for chronic disease control, as well as climate change.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-789X.2008.00542.x>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker, Public

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Unspecified Exposure

Geographic Feature: ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Australasia

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Adaption/Mitigation): ☒

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Mitigation

Resource Type: ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion, Review

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified